

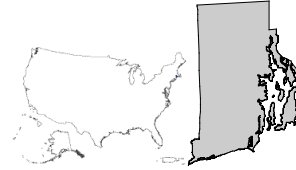


United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

January 2002

# 2001 Environmental Quality Incentives Program



## Customer Focus

The Donatellis have been farming since the late sixties. The whole family is involved in some way with the farm. Their farm is a real success story. When the Donatellis purchased the farm in the sixties the land was nothing more than a gravel pit with a very old dilapidated house and barn on the twenty-four acres. With the help of the Soil Conservation Service and now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), they have turned the gravel pit into a 12 field intensive rotational grazing site. Every few days, their prized Hampshire sheep are rotated between the 12 sites. Rotational grazing helped establish the grass in the fields by providing "natural" fertilizer, and by keeping the weeds at bay by mowing the fields after moving the sheep to the next site. This was very important because the land had virtually no topsoil.

The Donatellis have used several NRCS programs to attain the kind of farm they have today. Through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) program, the Donatellis installed a heavy use area to help prevent manure from leaving the barnyard and polluting the nearby Peepthead Brook. Peepthead Brook is the largest tributary feeding the Scituate Reservoir, which provides 60% of Rhode Island's drinking water.

With the help of their whole farm plan the Donatellis installed: a waste storage structure to store and manage sheep waste, fencing to limit livestock access to Peepthead Brook, buffers along the brook and around their farm pond to allow filtering of storm water runoff, a livestock watering facility to provide water to livestock, and roof runoff management to separate clean water from concentrated animal waste areas. In addition, they follow a nutrient management plan that includes annual soil testing to determine proper amounts and timing of application of animal wastes and fertilizers.

With the help of EQIP and by following their whole farm plan, the Donatellis have been able to: raise healthier sheep, help prevent erosion, conserve water, avoid polluting the waterways, and provide a long-term income.

## Rhode Island Summary

### Overview

In 2001, Rhode Island experienced a resurgence of interest in EQIP. While funds were sufficient to address each application received, many of the projects funded were located in watersheds critical to local drinking water supplies or area beaches closed due to pathogens from agricultural runoff. In addition, RI NRCS partnered with the Aquidneck Island Land Trust to merge whole farm EQIP management plans with the purchase of conservation easements on two adjacent parcels in the Town of Middletown. Both of the affected landowners enthusiastically applied for EQIP to address management concerns raised by the Land Trust. This partnership has resulted in the Land Trust recommending all easement holders to develop conservation plans with NRCS. In addition, NRCS expects an increase in applications over the next year because of concentrated efforts to alert all RI livestock farmers to the upcoming AFO/CAFO regulations.

### Accomplishments

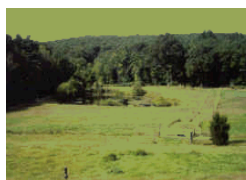
In total, Rhode Island has 52 active EQIP contracts. These plans cover 3957 acres, and represent over \$1,053,000 in federal cost share assistance. Despite Rhode Island's small size; agriculture in the state is as diverse as in our neighboring states. The EQIP program addresses problems that reflect that diversity. While there are over 700 farming operations in Rhode Island, a state with just over 600,000 acres total, many of these farms are operated by producers who work full-time off of the farm. As such, NRCS has worked with its partners to develop the EQIP program in Rhode Island to meet the needs of both the full-time commercial farmers, as well as the smaller "hobby" farms that are becoming more common. Natural resources have benefited by installing: improved irrigation systems that conserve water; alternate sources of water for large volume irrigators that enhance riparian systems; comprehensive nutrient management systems that include waste storage, land application, and fencing; and a variety of land management practices to protect water quality.

### Outlook

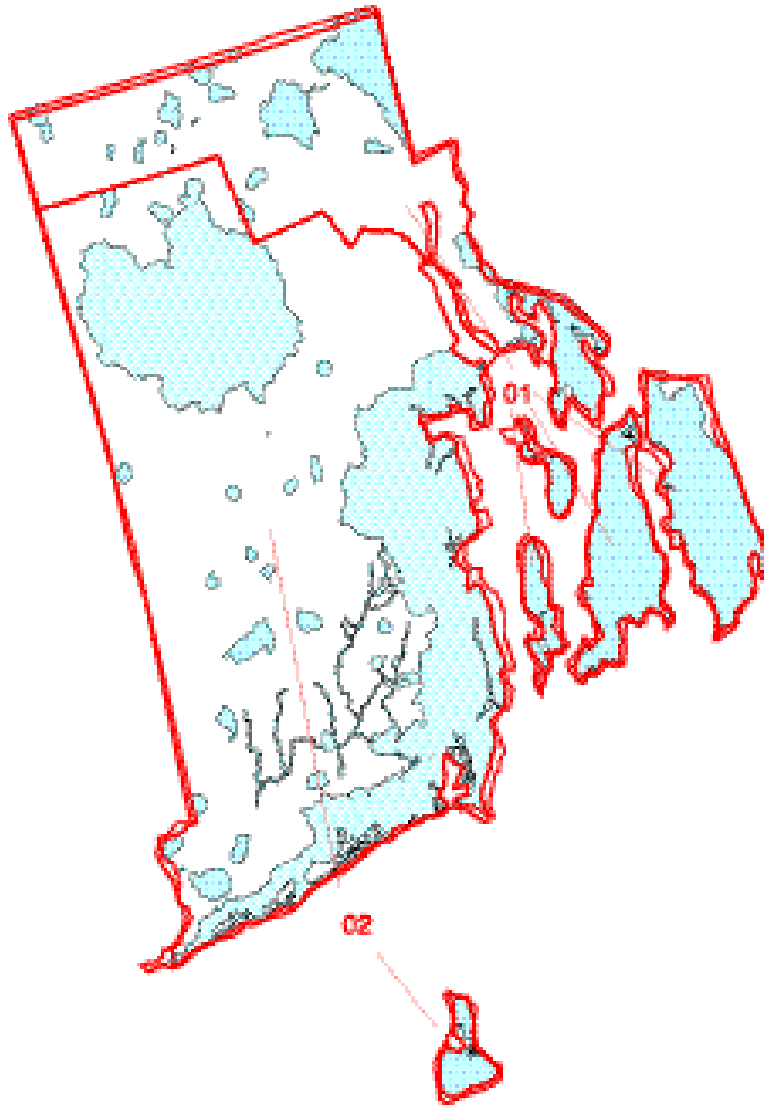
The agricultural community of Rhode Island finds it increasingly more difficult to farm in a rapidly urbanizing environment. Programs like EQIP are important tools to these farmers as they adapt to pressures of farming "on the fringe." Sustained funding for EQIP in Rhode Island would ensure their ability to meet these demands.

### State Contact

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## Rhode Island's EQIP Priority Areas Within Congressional Districts



### Rhode Island EQIP Dollars and Contracts (includes inactive or cancelled contracts)

Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2001		Cumulative Total (97-01)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 1	\$242,071	7	\$410,367	18
District 2	\$41,107	2	\$732,575	39
<b>State Totals</b>	<b>\$283,178</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>\$1,142,942</b>	<b>57</b>

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